



The hOLAgram

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A quarterly publication of the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (OLA)



◀ Mayor Williams during his meeting with the Latino Commission

▼ Mayor's toy drive before Christmas

Women's month: Proclamation on behalf of Mayor Williams to the famous Latina celebrity Cristina Saralegui



“Immunization Day” in front of OLA, where many Latino children were immunized

Press conference announcing the Housing Voucher Preference Program



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THE MAYOR'S LATINO COMMISSION: MOVING FAST INTO ACTION

With over half of its members appointed by Mayor Williams within the last year, the District of Columbia's Commission on Latino Community Development is on a fast track to fulfilling its mandate. The "Latino Commission", as it is commonly known, was created by the Mayor of the District of Columbia to serve as an effective consultancy board to the Mayor and advocate for the interests of the DC Latino communities. The Commission consists at least of 15 members appointed by the Mayor, all of whom are residents of the nation's capital. The members reflect the demographic, geographic, and ethnic diversity of the Latino communities residing and working in DC.

The primary responsibilities of the Commission members are: a) to advise OLA and the rest of the government on policies and programs affecting the Latino communities in the District; b) to serve as advocates for the wide spectrum of needs faced by Latino residents, and; c) to assist in developing mechanisms and structures within

the government to respond to those needs.

In the last few months, the Commission has seen a positive blend of new energy with experienced knowledge. Overall, this committed and enthusiastic group of people has found that in the midst of commonalities and disagreements, the Latino Commission makes a real difference. Monthly meetings at OLA have been well attended, the Commission's involvement in the passage of the Language Access Act was helpful and instrumental, and most recently, the Commission conducted a comprehensive planning retreat to revisit its mission, lay out the work ahead, and craft an agenda of agreements and continued involvement in issues of pressing concern for the community.

On February 24th, at the St. Gregory Hotel and Suites, Jay Haddock, Commission Chair, hosted all members of the Commission, the Director of OLA and Mayor Anthony A. Williams during an unprecedented meeting where the Mayor was briefed on the Commission's agenda.

This agenda is characterized by 4 general topics: 1) affordable housing, 2) gang prevention, 3) appointments of Latinos to senior government positions, boards and commissions, and 4) health.

Mayor Williams was very pleased with the Commission's work, and praised every member for their dedication to this important service. He was engaged in the discussion of every topic and interested in following up by the end of the year to assess the progress made. The hOLAGram and OLA's website will be the conduit to the community on any developments made by the Commission in partnership with OLA. The Latino Commission meets every third Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:00 pm at OLA (Reeves Center on the corner of 14th St. and U, NW). If you are interested in serving on the Latino Commission, you can contact the Office of Boards and Commissions at 202-727-1372.

Below are brief profiles of some of the current members of the Latino Commission.

Jay Haddock Ortiz, Chair, is the President of Capital Hotels of Washington, DC. A graduate of St. John's University in New York, Jay has resided in DC since 1978. Born in Salinas Puerto Rico, Jay has served on the boards of Whitman Walker Clinic, the Advisory Board of the Small Business Administration, and the Hotel Association of WDC Board of Directors. At Whitman Walker Clinic he raised \$ 1 million dollars over 11 years to fund Latino Programs.

Andrea Barbarin was born in Washington, DC and raised in Michigan. She received a law degree from George Washington Law School and is a community development consultant and attorney practicing in Washington, DC. Ms. Barbarin has served as a Judicial Intern for the Baltimore Immigration Court, worked as a student representative for the George Washington Law School Immigration Clinic, and received the Summer Public Interest Fellowship from the Hispanic Bar Association of D.C. to work at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia.

William A. Ramos a native of Camuy, Puerto Rico; was active in grassroots politics for more than 20 years in Miami, Florida, founding and participating on dozens of

community boards and task forces, including a decade of work with ASPIRA of Florida. Since moving to the District, William has served as the Director of Government Relations for America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth. He recently worked as a Government Relations and Policy Consultant for the YMCA of the USA. William has also volunteered as a mentor for the Latino Youth Entrepreneurship Program in the District.

Alberto Figueroa-García, is a long-time Ward 1 resident. He is a volunteer ESL instructor at the Sacred Heart Adult Education Center in Columbia Heights. In October, 2003 he was appointed to serve on the Mayor's Commission on Latino Community Development (CLCD). Alberto is bilingual (English/Spanish). He has been an active member of the Community Action Group (CAG) of the Latino Civil Rights Project; he also has participated in many activities and planning meetings including the retreat that forged the DC Latino Coalition (DCLC). Alberto is currently working on his dissertation research in the Ph.D. program at the School of Public Policy at George Mason University.

Mr. Roberto José Coquis is a native Washingtonian who was appointed by

President George W. Bush and currently serves as the Director for Management Support in the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) of the U.S. Department of State. With extensive experience in national Hispanic grassroots organizing, political campaigns and on Capitol Hill, he has served in the federal government since 2001 and has been involved with the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Interagency Task Force to "correct the chronic under-representation of Hispanics in the overall Federal workforce," based on Executive Order 13171. Since 1999, Mr. Coquis has been the Treasurer of the Hispanic Youth Foundation.

Angela Manso worked as a Legislative Associate for the American Association of Community Colleges in Washington, DC. She represented the organization before Congress, federal agencies and the Executive branch and developed policy recommendations on issues related to workforce development, welfare reform and nurse education. Prior to joining the Association, she worked as Senior Legislative Assistant for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, U.S. House of Representatives, under the leadership of the Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA). Manso is a graduate of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute.



OLA's TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND INTER-AGENCY CONSULTATIVE ASSISTANCE FOR LANGUAGE ACCESS

During fiscal year 2004 and the first quarter of fiscal year 2005, OLA has continued to furnish technical assistance and Spanish-language support to District governmental agencies, so that DC Latinos may have access to a full range of health, education, housing, economic development, and employment services through the effective execution, initially, of the Mayor's LEP Initiative and, as of April of last year, of the Language Access Act (LAA).

Furthermore, we have been collaborating and serving in a consultative capacity with the Office of Human Rights (OHR) and the Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA), in order to facilitate linkages with Latino community-based organizations and ensure that District public services are delivered in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner to limited English Latino clients, under the provisions of the LAA.

OLA /LAA Highlights:

- ♦ Monitored and delivered technical support to the 17 District governmental agencies that completed their participation under the Mayor's LEP Initiative, during Fiscal Year 2004.
- ♦ Initiated technical support activities for LAA Phase 1 District governmental

agencies (i.e. Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Employment Services, Metropolitan Police Department, DC Public Schools, Office of Planning, Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, and Office of Human Rights) in the areas of data collection, outreach, linguistic quality control, hiring of bilingual staff, and diversity training;

- ♦ Compiled and provided to LAA Phase 1 District governmental agencies an informational folder that contains demographic facts about DC Latinos, as well as useful tips that could serve implementing agencies in terms of improving services and tailoring programs to suit the needs of Latino clients who have limited English abilities;
- ♦ Improved OLA's Spanish translation/interpretation protocols in order to better support DC governmental agencies in their Spanish language access efforts;
- ♦ Provided translation/interpretation services to 25 different departments or offices of the DC Government in Fiscal Year 2004. For the first quarter of FY05 through February 24, 21 District departments have received Spanish translation/interpretation assistance.
- ♦ Performed 87 translations/interpretations, from English to Spanish, in a variety of subject areas, including health,

emergency services, housing, and education. For the first quarter of FY05 through February 24, OLA completed 71 translations or interpretations requests.

- ♦ Cooperated in the development of a new contracting statement of work to ensure that DC agencies acquire the services of highly qualified translation/interpretation vendors. This effort was done in association with the Office of Contracting and Procurement, OHR, and OAPIA;
- ♦ Continued to participate in the development of regulations for the Language Access Act in cooperation with the Language Access Coalition, OHR, and OAPIA;
- ♦ Developed with OAPIA and OHR a quality control procedure that will gauge the linguistic and cultural accuracy of Spanish translations produced under the LAA; and,
- ♦ Contributed, through active participation in the DCWIC's Universal Access Committee, in the development, adoption, and implementation of an LEP/ADA addendum to the business plan of the One-Stop Career Center System in the District of Columbia.

For more information on what OLA is doing in the area of Language Access please contact Juan Francisco Roque or Maribeth Bandas at 202-671-2825.

For a long time, community advocates have rightfully complained that DC Latinos, many of whom live in sub-standard rental apartments, do not have meaningful access to local resources that are targeted to meet their housing needs. Although a large number of Latinos may be eligible for housing assistance, their access to these services has been severely limited by linguistic barriers.

Realizing this, OLA, in conjunction with the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) and the Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA), have partnered to provide rental housing assistance for underserved Latino, Asian, and Pacific Islander segments of the District's population.

Under the terms of the agreement reached in February by DCHA Executive Director Michael Kelly, OAPIA Director Greg Chen, and OLA Director Gustavo Velasquez, DCHA will earmark 100 Housing Choice Vouchers Program (HCVP), also commonly known as Section 8 vouchers, for

eligible limited English households referred by OLA, OAPIA, and/or a designated community-based organization.

The partnership between OAPIA, OLA, and DCHA, and announced by Mayor Williams last January 16, stems from the implementation of the "Fair Housing Promotion" goal within the District's Consolidated Plan. This Plan addresses potential barriers to "fair housing," that ethnic minority households, particularly Latino, Asian, and Pacific Islander, face in the DC rental housing market.

Under the terms of the partnership, OLA and OAPIA will:

- a) conduct outreach activities to inform their respective communities about DCHA's housing programs;
- b) make referrals to DCHA about households that may be eligible for housing assistance; and
- c) maintain a list of potentially eligible Latino, Asian, and Pacific Islander households.

In return, DCHA will:

- a) Train OLA, OAPIA staff and designated community based organizations about DCHA's housing assistance programs; and,
- b) Provide 100 existing Housing Choice Vouchers.

Mayor's press conference on Housing Choice Vouchers. Jan 16





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Outreach

❖ **The Mayor's State of the District Address (SODA)** took place on March 21. This event highlighted the numerous accomplishments by Mayor Williams and his administration during 2004. Among the top accomplishments is the reduction of crime in the city, more jobs created for District residents, progress on his aim for voting representation in Congress, extraordinary financial stability and viability for the city, and more resources for education for our children.

❖ **Outreach to Latino Businesses**
On January 13, the Latino Business Outreach Fair took place on 14th Street in Ward 4. The event helped Latino businesses to improve their understanding and knowledge of the city's regulations and businesses' rights and responsibilities.

❖ **OLA's Hypothermia night** took place on January 31. The objective was to take blankets and visit shelters where an increasing number of Latino homeless people are housed. During this activity we were able to witness the increased need for more bilingual personnel at shelters and DETOX centers.

❖ **OLA participated during Operation Fight back** with MPD and other DC agencies. This time we concentrated on two buildings (most of the tenants are Latinos), promoting the programs offered by the Department of Human Services, and providing Spanish materials that may help Latinos access these vital programs.

❖ **DC Jail partnership.** OLA has begun a new partnership with the DC Jail, starting March 7, to provide, in coordination with a few Latino CBOs, presentations to Latino inmates on topics such as prisoners' rights, immigration issues, and the negative effects of drugs, alcohol and HIV/STDs.

Presenters include La Clínica del Pueblo, Neighbors Consejo and Planned Parenthood.

❖ **Partnerships with DC Consulates.** OLA has begun to provide information and outreach to DC Latinos through Latin American consulates. The first round of presentations were conducted at the Mexican consulate during the months of February and March 2005. We plan to also engage Latino constituents visiting the Salvadoran and Honduran consulates.

❖ **Partnership between OLA and DC Energy.** OLA and the DC Energy Reach Campaign have entered into partnership to increase the information available and provide assistance to members of the Latino community who are eligible for utility assistance. Qualified residents now can apply to receive discounted rates on their electric, gas, telephone, and water bills every Tuesday and Thursday at the OLA offices. These services are provided in Spanish and English. For more information contact OLA.



The Directors of OLA and DC Energy, along with Willie Vazquez, Kathy Ruffner and other staff during the partnership's announcement.

❖ **The Hispanic Heritage Poster Contest** promoted young artists by showcasing the cultural heritage of Latinos in the DC Metro area. Thanks to the sponsorship of VEGA Yellow Pages, this contest was open to Latino students for a grand prize of \$2,500. The winning poster will be reproduced on the front cover of The VEGA Yellow Pages 20th edition and also be adapted for promotional items such as billboards, t-shirts, and other programs.

Upcoming events

❖ **The VEGA Yellow Pages' Contest Award Ceremony** will be conducted on March 31 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. During this event, the winner of the VEGA youth artistic contest will be unveiled, celebrating the 20th anniversary of this institution in the DC Metro area. OLA and the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities are partners of VEGA's celebrations.

❖ **Housing training for CBO front line workers.** OLA, in coordination with the Office of Human Rights, is organizing a Fair Housing workshop for front line workers of Latino CBOs. This workshop will take place on April 30. For more information contact Norberto Martinez at 202-671-2825.

❖ **LGBT Citizen Summit.** On April 30, OLA will partner with the recently created Mayor's Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs during the first ever LGBT Summit in Southeast DC. OLA's goal is to have the Latino LGBT community well represented at this important forum and discussion. For more information contact Kathy Ruffner at 202-671-2825.

New staff

Claudia Marquez has joined OLA as our new Grants Program Coordinator. Prior to joining us, Claudia was a Senior Program Specialist with Mosaica Consulting here in DC, where she provided technical assistance to nonprofit organizations and federal agencies. She has experience in program evaluation, database development, data gathering and analysis, strategic planning, and facilitation. She has volunteered with a number of nonprofit organizations in the District including Miriam's Kitchen, ByteBack, Washington Free Clinic, and La Clínica del Pueblo. Claudia has a Master's in Social Work Policy and Administration from the Catholic University of America.

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